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Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Identical letters dated 3 May 2004 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am writing following the most recent Palestinian terrorist attack perpetrated against the citizens of Israel.

On Sunday afternoon, 2 May 2004, two Palestinian terrorists perpetrated a deadly ambush on an Israeli car at the entrance to Gush Katif in the Gaza Strip, killing eight-month pregnant Tali Hatuel, age 34, and her four young daughters Hila, 11, Hadar, 9, Roni, 7, and Merav, 2. Tali Hatuel was a social worker for the Gaza Coast Regional Council where she worked with the families of terror victims. Standing over the shrouded bodies of his wife and daughters at the funeral in Ashkelon on Sunday evening, David Hatuel said, "We were so happy and now everything is terminated. You were my flowers and I will not forget you".

The terrorists opened fire on the small car, causing it to spin off the road. The gunmen subsequently approached the vehicle and assassinated each of the individual occupants at point-blank range, including the youngest daughter sitting in her toddler seat. The car was found riddled with bullets and the carpet inside was stained with blood. Another Israeli civilian, a resident of Ohad in the Eshkol region, traveling in a separate car, suffered gunfire wounds and two soldiers were injured. An explosive device was also detonated by terrorists near the scene of the shooting. Yasser Arafat's own Fatah Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and Islamic Jihad claimed joint responsibility for the "heroic" attack in a call to the Associated Press. A celebration of the massacre is scheduled to take place in Palestinian Authority-controlled areas of Gaza later this week.

Yesterday's attack demonstrates yet again the strategic failure of the Palestinian Authority to undertake efforts on the ground to arrest, disrupt and restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning violent attacks on Israelis.

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The flagrant refusal of the Palestinian leadership to fulfil its counter-terrorist obligations poses a direct affront to the commitments made in the road map and elsewhere, which compel the Palestinian Authority to prevent "all acts of violence against Israelis anywhere", and constitutes a brazen violation of the most basic obligations of international law, human rights and Security Council resolutions. But the attacks are more than the gravest of legal violations. The cold-blooded murder of those five young women flouts the most basic codes of humanity; and their tolerance and support by the Palestinian leadership is criminal in its moral depravity.

Israel calls upon the members and bodies of the international community to express their unequivocal condemnation of the deliberate murder of innocent civilians and to make clear to the Palestinian leadership and to those regime sponsors of terrorism their absolute rejection of terrorist tactics, and their acceptance of nothing less than the complete dismantling of terrorist organizations and relentless efforts to prevent terrorism and bring its perpetrators and supporters to justice, in accordance with international law, signed agreements between the parties, and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1373 (2001). Only a unified and uncompromising stand against the perpetrators of these crimes can bring an end to the Palestinian strategy of terrorism and violence and enable progress towards the vision of a negotiated two-State solution, as part of the road map process.

I submit this letter in follow-up to numerous letters detailing the campaign of Palestinian terrorism launched in September 2000, which document the crimes for which the terrorists and their supporters must be held fully accountable.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 156 and 67, and of the Security Council. An identical letter is being submitted to the President of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Arye **Mekel**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.